

Standards for Parsonages

Revised February 2018

Be it resolved that the following recommendation be adopted on the standards for parsonages for the GNJUMC effective, July 1, 2019.

Responsible Group in the Local Church

The Book of Discipline does not mandate a parsonage committee however, it is strongly recommended that each local church Charge Conference form a parsonage committee. The committee will follow-up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor or pastor's family. The chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish relations, the chairperson of the board of trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance. (§ 258.2 g (16) and § 2532.4)

Standards for Parsonage (Existing Parsonages)

All parsonages shall meet local requirements for a Certificate of Occupancy.

For existing parsonages, each local charge shall provide and maintain the following furnishings:

1. Living room and family room furniture.
2. Dining room furniture.
3. Kitchen, including stove, refrigerator with separate freezer compartment, exhaust fan, and dishwasher.
4. Laundry equipment – automatic washer and dryer.
5. Standard television connection (providing at least 30 channels), high speed internet service and one telephone line (cell or land line). Where possible consider bundling the services.
6. Floor coverings, solid surfaces are preferred.
7. Window shades and blinds, or curtains and drapes, functioning.
8. One fire extinguisher in kitchen and one extinguisher outside of the furnace room. There shall be at least one extinguisher per floor level. All fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and Carbon monoxide detectors are to be in compliance with local code requirements for rental properties or certificate of occupancy.
9. Closets or free-standing storage units in each bedroom.
10. Drives and walks should be hard surfaced.
11. Minimally acceptable outside lighting, for safety and to illuminate walkways and driveways.
12. Trash cans. In municipalities where garbage pickup is not part of the tax base and is billed to the parsonage, that local churches pay for this service.
13. Lawn care, snow removal equipment, and/or appropriate service shall be provided.
14. A study for the pastor in either the parsonage or church building. Office furnishing shall include a desk, desk chair, minimally acceptable shelving for the pastor's library, additional chairs, and a locking filing cabinet.
15. Furnishings for special rooms such as sun porch, den, etc., that may be different from one charge to another.
16. Parsonage electrical service shall conform to the current National Electrical Code.
17. Parking space for a minimum of one (1) car shall be provided.
18. Each charge shall decide if it will provide a security/alarm system.
19. The septic or sewer system shall be fully functional and meet the needs of the parsonage family.

Additional Suggestions

1. Electrical service to be inspected every five (5) years by a licensed electrician.
2. Roof inspection every five (5) years.
3. Energy Audit every five (5) years.

Standards for Parsonages (Purchasing or Building a New Parsonage)

All parsonages shall meet local requirements for a Certificate of Occupancy.

All newly constructed or newly purchased parsonages shall be in full compliance with the dictates of the Book of Discipline. Consideration shall be made for those with handicapping conditions -

Provide on the ground-floor of a newly constructed parsonage: (1) one room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with a disability; (2) a fully accessible bathroom; and (3) fully accessible laundry facilities (§ 2544.4d)

Option One

- a. The use of maintenance-free materials in building and in finishing and furnishing, these contribute to keeping maintenance costs lower.
- b. The following room requirements:
 - (a) Living Room/Family Room
 - (b) Dining Room
 - (c) Kitchen
 - (d) Study
 - (e) Baths (2)
 - (f) Bedrooms (3)
- c. A minimum electrical service of 200 amperes.
- d. A garage of a size to accommodate 2 cars, plus room for storage of lawn mowers, bicycles, tools, garden equipment, ladders, paint supplies, etc.
- e. Space to store large articles of furniture and equipment.
- f. The use of materials meeting the most energy efficient standards for insulation and windows.
- g. Careful consideration should be given in choosing the location of the parsonage. This consideration might include the distance from the church, accessibility from main streets of the community and the church, the neighborhood and its future, and the community itself and its future growth.

Option Two

- a. The standards of Option One would apply with consideration by the church of purchasing, leasing, renting a townhouse or condominium. This option would be negotiated by the District Superintendent, the local charge and the pastor following consultation with the District Committee on Church Location and Building.
- b. The purpose of this option is to provide an alternative to the "traditional" church parsonage for ministry in special situations. Allowing for the wide variety of townhouse/condo choices, it is difficult to recommend a standard for such a setting.

Responsibility

Each pastor is responsible for:

1. Furnishings for as many bedrooms as the family needs.
2. Personal items such as television, vacuum cleaner, small appliances, dishes, glassware, flatware, cleaning tools, wastebaskets, and decorative accessories.
3. Floor maintenance
4. Trash disposal and recycling
5. It is expected that the pastor shall provide tenant (renters) insurance, to cover property loss and personal liability.
6. Restitution for any damage beyond normal wear and tear.

7. Exiting pastor shall remove all personal items and furniture from the parsonage and property and leave in a “broom clean” state.

Each charge shall provide:

1. Utilities – heat, electricity, gas/oil, water, sewage, and basic non-personal telephone services.
2. Maintenance for all parsonage equipment.
3. Basic furniture for all rooms except the bedrooms.
4. Funds for the repair of the parsonage and its maintenance should be allocated and allowed to accumulate so that continuing care and major repairs can be made when needed.

Multiple Charge Appointments and Clergy Couples

1. In appointments where clergy is appointed to more than one church and a parsonage is provided by one of the churches the utility expenses (heat, water and electric) will be divided equally between the churches. Any capital improvements and maintenance on the parsonage are the responsibility of the church that owns the parsonage.
2. In cases of clergy couples (when the couple resides in the parsonage of one of the appointments), the utility expenses (heat, water and electric) for the parsonage will be divided equally between the appointments.

Miscellaneous

1. We recommend that, in addition to the required written reports filed annually with the Annual Church Conference paperwork, there be a complete video/photo inventory of all church-owned furnishings in the parsonage. The inventory and all videos and photos shall be maintained annually.
2. It should be the responsibility of the Parsonage Committee to become acquainted with the parsonage and, after a new pastoral appointment, meet with the parsonage family to discuss the minimum acceptability of housing and furnishings, and to meet annually thereafter with the parsonage family.
3. During the transition of pastoral appointment – the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Chair, the exiting pastor, the new pastor and the Board of Trustee Chair will walk through the parsonage together for inspection and planning. It is recommended to utilize the Church Conference Parsonage inspection report for this walk through.
4. The right of the pastor to own furniture and equipment cannot be challenged. However, if s/he does own furniture and goods that s/he wishes to use in the parsonage, and parsonage furniture has to be stored, s/he should make every effort to store it properly so it is in good condition and does not suffer damage from being stored. The site or method of storage for any church owned furniture shall be determined by mutual agreement between the pastor and the Board of Trustees.–The pastor assumes financial responsibility for the storage of any unused furniture.
5. The parsonage is the pastor’s for his/her tenure in that church or charge. Therefore, s/he has the responsibility to care for the furniture to protect it from damage by pets or children and, if it is damaged, to return it to a condition equal to that when s/he received it to use. If an item of furniture is damaged beyond repair, s/he is obligated to replace it.
6. To respect the privacy of clergy and his/her family, the church has responsibility to make an appointment and secure the approval of the pastor or an adult member of the household, prior to visiting the parsonage at any time.

Appeals

Appeals by the churches or pastors should be made to the District Superintendent as the final authority to interpret and implement the foregoing standards.

Submitted by:

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